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Russia and Moldova:
Developing Relations
Between Two Countries

by

Robert J. Smith Jr.
Captain, United States Air Force
B.A., University of Maryland

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of


MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL


March 1993

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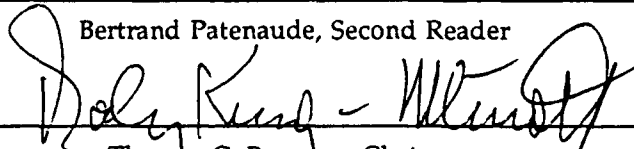
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ABSTRACT

The breakup of the Soviet Union has created a myriad of problems not the least of which is determining where each of the resulting states belongs in the world order and how each should develop international relations. Russia and Moldova are driven together by economic necessity and by the continuing conflict in the Dniester Republic of Moldova. While their relationship should be that of two sovereign states trying to solve a mutual problem, it has not been that simple. Both states are still searching for a direction for foreign and domestic policy. Russia is trying to balance her foreign policy emphasis between relations with the West and the Near Abroad. Moldova's inexperienced government is struggling in attempts to formulate both domestic and foreign policy. This thesis examines the Russian-Moldovan relationship at the national level, looking at how the countries are trying to defend national interests while developing relations. It will also examine how their bilateral relationship impacts their relations with other countries. The conclusion reached is that Russia is not willing to treat Moldova as a sovereign state. Russia is trying to maintain control of not just the bilateral relationship, but also relations between Moldova and other members of the international community. Russia maintains this control primarily by being uncooperative in talks designed to remove Russian troops from Moldova.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Russia, while claiming successor status to the Soviet Union in many areas, is a new state in terms of developing international relations. The problems it faces in developing international relations are not the same as those faced by the Soviet Union. This is especially true in the relations Russia must develop with the "Near Abroad", the term the Russian government uses to identify those states which were formerly a part of the Soviet Union. The goal of this thesis is to examine and analyze the international relationship developing between Russia and one of these new countries, Moldova.

There is discord within the Russian government on how to develop relations with the Near Abroad, in general, and there are particular problems in relations with Moldova. Moldovan relations are plagued by problems with the 14th Army (the Russian military unit still stationed on the left bank of the Dniester river in Moldova), the fate of Russians in Moldova, the historic problems between the local people and the central government in Moscow, Moldovan relations with Romania, and the Moldovan position toward the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The relationship between Russia and Moldova, while containing many peculiarities, does have many points in common with others states of the former Soviet Union. Most of the new Post-Soviet European States have the same basic

types of laws pertaining to foreign nationals and their participation in society. These laws are of great importance in defining their relationship with Russia. Many of the other states are also facing problems, albeit not quite as severe, with Russian military troops on their soil. Strong economic ties between Russia and these states must also be addressed.

Moldova does have its unique points as well. It is one of the few areas with Russian troops active in a peacekeeping role on its territory. It has a shared heritage not with Russia, but with another sovereign state, Romania. There are portions of the country which were actively trying to secede, one of which wanted unification with Russia. All of these conditions make the Moldovan-Russian relationship an important area for study.

This thesis will look at the development of Moldovan-Russian relations through an evaluation of authorized and unauthorized policy statements from each government, and individuals in the governments. It will look at how the Moldovan government has been formed, its' present domestic policies and how these effect its foreign policy. It will look at the discussion taking place within the Russian government about what exactly are Russian national interests and the affects of this discussion on foreign policy. It will identify and analyze the options which are being discussed in the Russian foreign policy establishment. It will also look at how the Russian-Moldovan relationship effects Moldova's relations with other countries such as Romania and Ukraine.

The conclusion reached is that Russia is not willing to treat Moldova as a sovereign state. Russia is trying to maintain control of not just the bilateral relationship, but also relations between Moldova and other members of the international community. Russia maintains this control primarily by being uncooperative in talks designed to remove Russian troops from Moldova. The government of Moldova faces a long uphill battle to gain peace on its territory and to get the respect it deserves from the Russian government.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PROPOSAL

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B. RESEARCH DESIGN

For this study I am analyzing the relationship from the "rational actor" level of analysis. This means the relationship will be the result of a rational decision-making process within each country pursuing its own interests. The relationship between the two states, as sovereign entities is the focus of this study.

As is pointed out by Jonathan R. Adelman and Deborah Anne Palmieri in their book The Dynamics of Soviet Foreign Policy gathering data on foreign policy matters, especially Russian or Soviet foreign policy, creates interesting challenges. Most of the data available is secondary; that is, it is someone's

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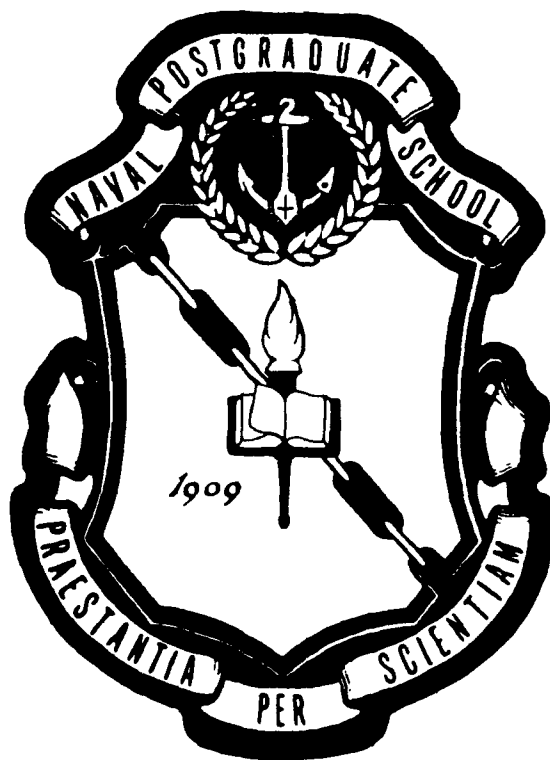
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The conclusion reached is that Russia is not willing to treat Moldova as a sovereign state. Russia is trying to maintain control of not just the bilateral relationship, but also relations between Moldova and other members of the international community. Russia maintains this control primarily by being uncooperative in talks designed to remove Russian troops from Moldova. The government of Moldova faces a long uphill battle to gain peace on its territory and to get the respect it deserves from the Russian government.

RUSSIA AND MOLDOVA:
DEVELOPING RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES

by

Robert J. Smith Jr.
Captain, United States Air Force
B. A. University of Maryland, 1986

The breakup of the Soviet Union has created a myriad of problems not the least of which is determining where each of the resulting states belongs in the world order and how each should develop international relations. Russia and Moldova are driven together by economic necessity and by the continuing conflict in the Dniester Republic of Moldova. While their relationship should be that of two sovereign states trying to solve a mutual problem, it has not been that simple. Both states are still searching for a direction for foreign and domestic policy. Russia is trying to balance her foreign policy emphasis between relations with the West and the Near Abroad. Moldova's inexperienced government is struggling in attempts to formulate both domestic and foreign policy. This thesis examines the Russian-Moldovan relationship at the national level, looking at how the countries are trying to defend national interests while developing relations. It will also examine how their bilateral relationship impacts their relations with other countries. The conclusion reached is that Russia is not willing to treat Moldova as a sovereign state. Russia is trying to maintain control of not just the bilateral relationship, but also relations between Moldova and other members of the international community. Russia maintains this control primarily by being uncooperative in talks designed to remove Russian troops from Moldova.

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in National Security Affairs
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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

Monterey, California



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reporting or analysis rather than original information. Information in mass media tends to lack solid analysis and often contains political bias. By drawing information from articles translated from Russian (Soviet prior to January 1991), Moldovan, Ukrainian, and Romanian sources I hope to avoid the problem of bias and provide in depth analysis of my own as much as possible.

This thesis will look at the development of Moldovan-Russian relations through an evaluation of authorized and unauthorized policy statements from each government, and individuals in the governments. It will look at how the Moldovan government has been formed, its' present domestic policies and how these effect its foreign policy. It will look at the discussion taking place within the Russian government about what exactly are Russian national interests and the affects of this discussion on foreign policy. It will identify and analyze the options which are being discussed in the Russian foreign policy establishment. It will also look at how the Russian-Moldovan relationship effects Moldova's relations with other countries such as Romania and Ukraine.

This will be done through a systematic review of newspapers, magazines, and appropriate journals. I will also conduct a review of Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) translations of Russian, Romanian, Ukrainian, and Moldovan newspaper articles and Radio and Television broadcasts. Additionally there will be a review and analysis of pertinent Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) articles and research reports. Books and articles on the basics of establishing relations between countries will be used to provide a framework for

the analysis of the relationship. Additional material relating to Moscow's historic problems in relating to nationalities will also be reviewed. The thesis will also provide an historic background of the relationship between the people of Moldova and the Soviets/Russians. However, emphasis will be on the development of situation in the last couple of years concentrating on the time since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December, 1991.

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II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MOLDOVAN REGION

A. HISTORY TO WORLD WAR II

The relations between Russia and Moldova are strongly influenced by the history of the region. The historic area of Moldavia is comprised of three basic territories: Bukovina, Wallachia and Bessarabia. (See Figure 1), Throughout the 13th and 14th centuries the land was populated by Slavic Vlachs migrating from Hungary, and ruled under feudal principalities. By the mid 16th century, Moldova had become a subject state of the Ottoman empire. It remained under Turkish control until about 1791, when control of some of the eastern parts of the area passed to Russia.

By 1812, Russia had secured most of eastern Moldavia, the territory known as Bessarabia. Under the Tsar, this area was given basic autonomous self-government, and the Romanian governmental systems were left intact. During the Crimean War, Russia occupied increased portions of Moldavia. In 1856, the treaty of Paris established Moldavia and Wallachia as principalities under Turkish sovereignty and removed them from Russian control. In 1861-62, the two territories united to form the new country of Romania, still under Turkish control. In 1877-78, Romania claimed independence and was recognized by the Berlin Congress. (Until this time Romania was a part of the Ottoman Empire.)

HISTORIC MOLDOVA

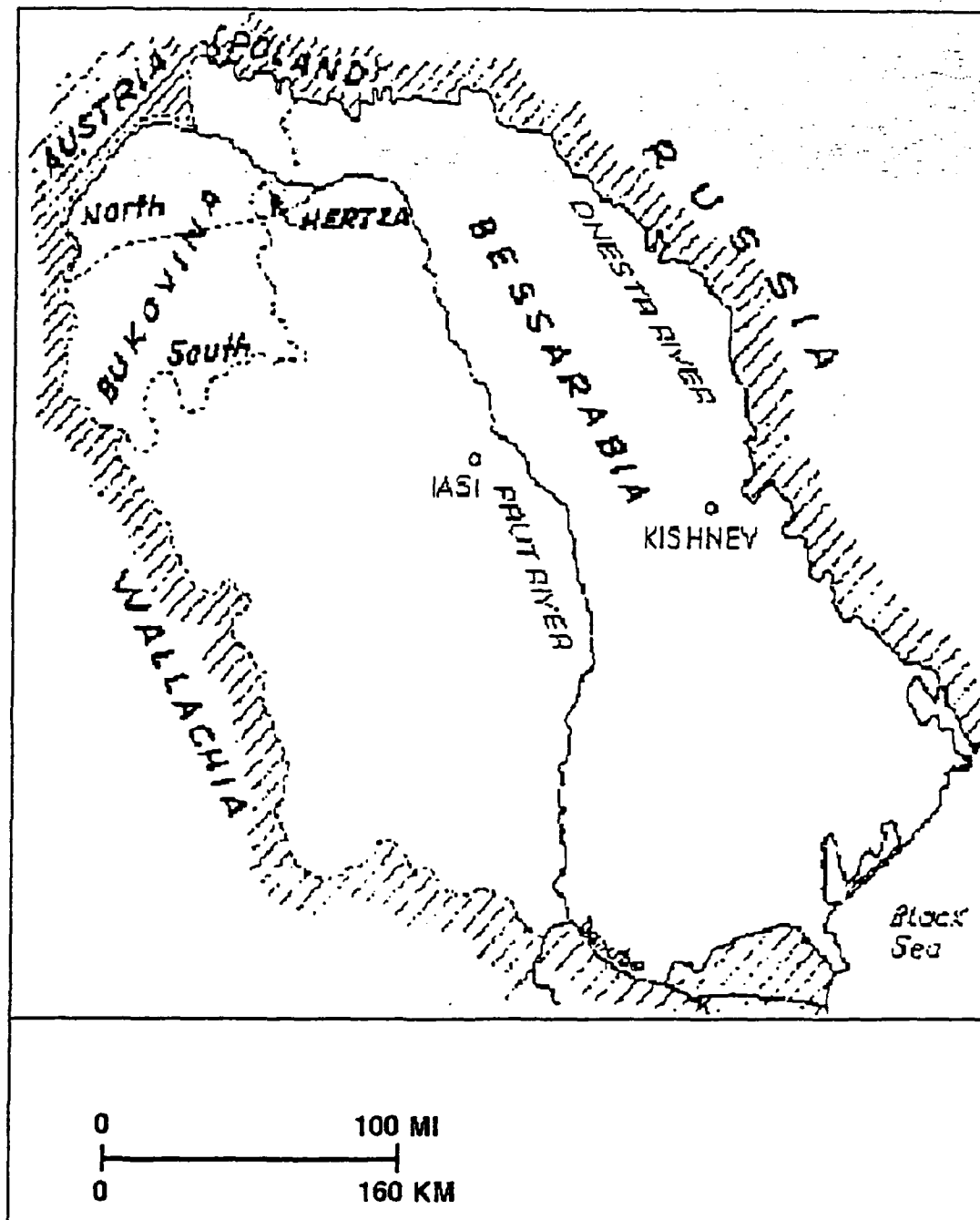


Figure 1
(From Nicholas Dima, From Moldavia to Moldova)

In 1918, Romania seized the territory of Bessarabia from the Russians in an effort to reunite the areas of Moldavia, Wallachia, and Bessarabia. In 1940, Romania was forced to return Bessarabia to the USSR by the Soviet government. The area was then joined with six regions of the Moldavian Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic (ASSR) to form the Moldavian Socialist Soviet Republic (SSR). (These six regions are contained in the current major area of conflict, the east bank of the Dniester river.) Aside from several months in 1941, when Romania regained control, and when the area was under occupation during the war, the area remained under Soviet control from 1940 until the independence movement of 1991.

In 1917, just after the Bolshevik revolution, the Russian controlled area of Bessarabia declared independence. Three months later, it felt forced to unite with Romania to defend itself against the Bolsheviks.¹ The Soviets did not accept the unification of Romania and Bessarabia, land the Soviets considered rightly part of the Soviet Union. In 1924, as a part of a political ploy to try and regain control of the entire Bessarabian region, the Soviets created the Moldavian ASSR on the east bank of the Dniester river. This was an area inhabited by a large number of Moldavians, but it had always been a part of the Ukrainian SSR. The Russian hope was that Moldavians in eastern Romania would want to reunite with their brethren in an "independent" region inside the Soviet Union and force

¹Bohdan Nahaylo, "Ukraine and Moldova: The View from Kiev", Radio Liberty Research, Vol 1, 1 May 1992, Num 18, p 40.

Romania to return the territory to the Russians.² However, this never happened and the Soviets used plan B.

In June of 1940, the Soviets, using the Red army, and with the blessings of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, annexed all of Bessarabia. Their justification was that they were liberating the Ukrainians in the area from their Romanian oppressors. The Soviets quickly took the conquered land and divided it. They attached parts of northern and southern Bessarabia to the Ukrainian SSR. They then took the remainder and attached a portion of the Moldavian ASSR (east bank of the Dniester, formally part of the Ukrainian SSR) and pronounced it the Moldavian SSR.³ (See Figure 2)

The Soviets were relentless in establishing control in the territory. All industrial enterprises with more than 20 workers, or 10 workers and a motor over 10 h.p., were nationalized. Between 100,000 and 150,000 Moldavians were exported to Soviet industrial sites. 13,000 specialists were brought in from Russia, Ukraine, and Byelorussia to assume all positions of responsibility. These specialists included 500 teachers to start the "russification" of the school system in time for the new school year. "The truth is that the Soviet authorities began

²Paul E. Lydolph, Geography of the USSR, as referenced in Nicholas Dima, From Moldavia to Moldova The Soviet-Romanian Territorial dispute, (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1991), p 23.

³Vladimir Socor, "Moldavian Lands Between Romania and Ukraine: The Historical and Political Geography." Report on the USSR, Vol 2, 16 November 1991, Num 46: p 23-26.

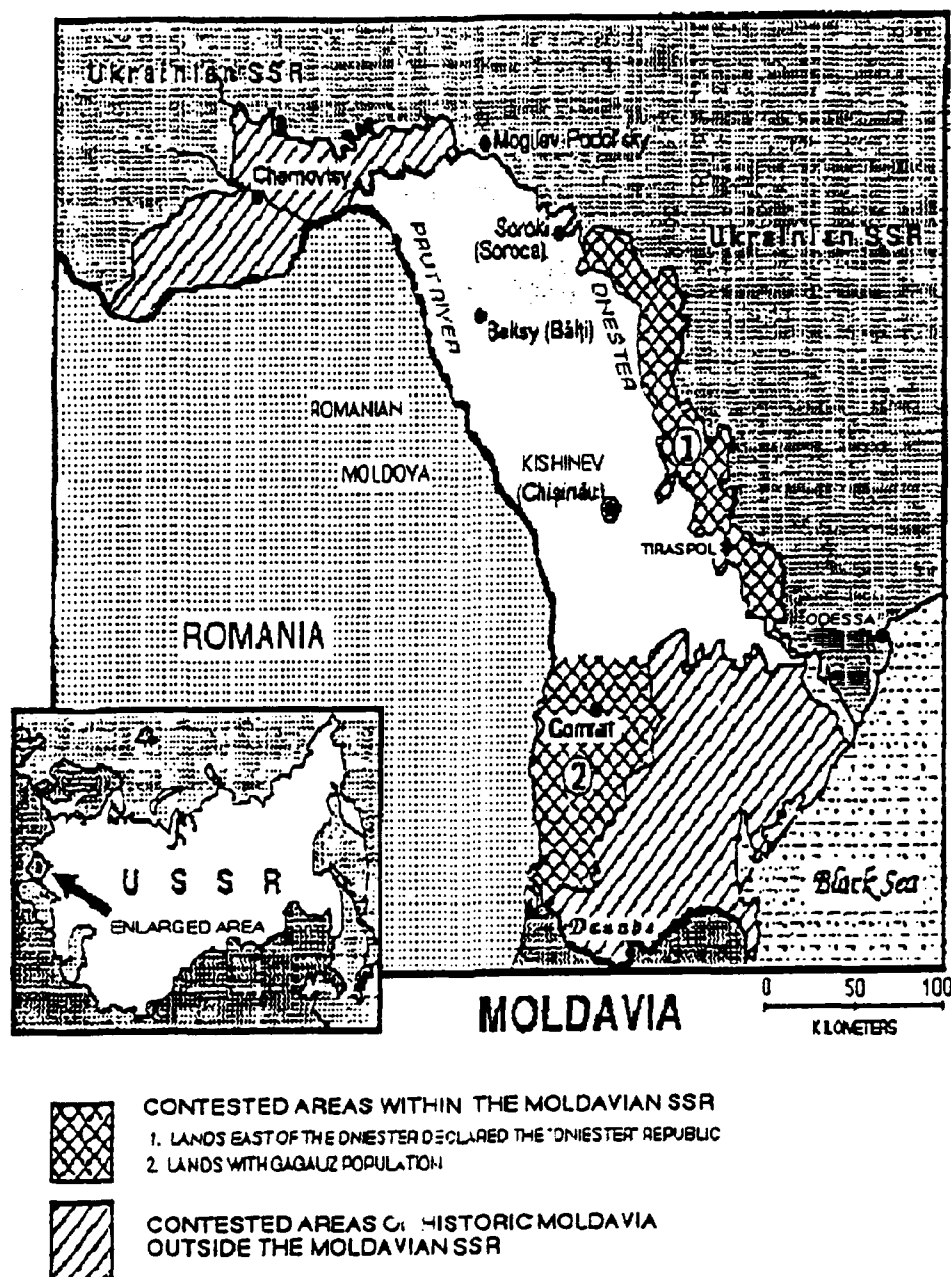


Figure 2

(From Vladimir Socor, Moldavian Lands between Romania and Ukraine: The Historical and Political Geography)

immediately russification of public life coupled with ruthless measures designed to weaken the Romanian ethnic character of Moldavia."⁴ When the Romanians regained control of the area for a short period in 1941, they found total ruin. In general the area was in total disarray. Industries were destroyed and the economy disrupted. Mass graves of the Romanians who were not deported were discovered. Russian atrocities abound.⁵

While the Soviets were preoccupied with the German blitzkrieg, the remaining Moldavian population, in concert with the Romanian leadership, turned against the Russians who remained. The invading Romanians did not stop at Bessarabia, the area they had historic claim to, but continued on to occupy large areas of Ukraine. This period of oppression lasted until the Soviets regained control in 1944. With the defeat of the Germans, the Soviet army rolled over the Romanians and returned the conquered territories to the Soviet fold. The activities of both sides during this transitional generated strong animosity among all involved. This animosity is still active today.⁶

⁴Dima, p 43-44.

⁵Ibid., p 45.

⁶Judith Ingram, "Behind Moldova's Ethnic Strife -- A Long History of Conflict." San Francisco Chronicle, 2 July 1992, A 16 c1.

B. SOVIETIZATION

Beginning immediately after the war, the Soviets undertook an effort to bring the Moldavian SSR into the main stream of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Many of the Soviet policies used in the Moldavian SSR were similar to those used in many other republics. These mostly consisted of consolidation of Soviet/Communist rule, the restriction of social organizations, mass deportations, arrests, executions, and importation of ethnically Russian and Ukrainian advisors and political leaders. In these activities, the Moldavian SSR shared its suffering with the majority of the Union. However, several of Stalin's policies in the Moldavian SSR were unique to that area because of its Romanian historical background. Specifically, Stalin undertook to create a Moldavian nation from the peoples in the Moldavian SSR in an effort to "sever the connection with neighboring Romania for good."⁷

In the former Bessarabia, the communists did not feel the need to put forth even the slightest appearance of democracy, that is insuring the local population had at least some representation in the government, as had been done in the other newly-acquired areas. They immediately formed Soviets and appointed executive committees, all native Russian or Ukrainian, to run the counties,

⁷Jonathan Eyal, The Nationalities Question in the Soviet Union ed Graham Smith, (New York, NY: Longman, 1990) p 126.

districts, and towns.⁸ The Moldavian language was "returned to its roots" by supplanting the Latin alphabet with Cyrillic. Local Romanian culture and customs were outlawed and the Russian culture was elevated to supremacy. Romanian literature was banned and emphasis was placed on Russian historic literature.⁹ (It is interesting to note that the Great Soviet Encyclopedia contains the following under the heading Moldavian, the language of the Moldavians: . . . first texts . . . dating from the late 15th and early 16th century . . . writing system was based on Cyrillic until the 19th century . . . during the Soviet period the language has been enriched . . .).¹⁰

In addition to taking away/modifying the written language, the spoken language was revised as well. Because the new government officials were from the left bank, they spoke Russian and Ukrainian, not Moldavian/Romanian. The average person now had virtually no say in government activities because he no longer spoke the requisite language. The few Moldavians brought into government positions were mostly from the old Moldavian ASSR. Many didn't speak their native (Moldavian) language well, if at all. They were usually fluent in Russian, however. They had been living under Soviet rule for years and had

⁸Gerhard Simon, Nationalism and Policy toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union, (San Francisco, CA: Westview Press, 1991) p 176-180.

⁹Eyal, p 127.

¹⁰Great Soviet Encyclopedia, (New York, NY: MacMillan, 1977) Vol 16, p 422.

viewed the Russian language as their avenue for advancement. If the need arose to address their "fellow countrymen" they could always get a translator.¹¹

A new history of Moldavia was written by Russian and Ukrainian scholars. It de-emphasized, to the point of eliminating, Romanian influences, while trying to create a heritage of Russian and Ukrainian roots. This had the effect of denying the people of the region knowledge of their true ethnic heritage while thrusting a fictional one into their laps.

The Soviets had to carefully balance the policies in Moldavia. They did not want to engender a strong national sense of identity in the people, but at the same time they had to insure that all remnants of Romanian culture were removed and Soviet culture was adopted. Some modern scholars consider this an attempt at "separating the indigenous population of Soviet Moldavia spiritually, culturally, and linguistically from the Romanian people, of which they are in fact a part."¹²

Soviet policy was destined to fail due to conflicting goals and the impossibility of "creating a nation". The inevitability of failure was masked for some time because of the strong hand of the Soviets, the strict control of the Russian political elite, and the cooperative, or at least non-confrontational,

¹¹Michael Bruchis, Nations-Nationalities-People: A study of the Nationalities Policy of the Communist Party in Soviet Moldavia, (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1984) p 33.

¹²Ibid., p 1.

attitude of the communist regime in Romania. As each of these reasons dissolved, so did Soviet control of Moldavia, and under Gorbachev's glasnost' and perestroika, the last Soviet controls fell away.¹³

¹³Eyal, p 128.

III. MOLDOVAN GOVERNMENT

A. INITIAL FORMATION

The independence forces in Moldavia were slower in organizing than those in most other republics because of the tight communist rule and lack of "nationalistic leadership" in the republic. While the first seeds of discontent may have been seen by the communist leadership in 1987, the first official independence group "The Popular Front" was not established until May 1989.¹⁴ It was at this point that the communist leadership truly realized confrontation was imminent.

The rallying cry of the Popular Front was for a return to Romanian roots. The Romanian flag was flown and the Romanian national anthem sung at many of the Popular Front's rallies. The Moldavian Supreme Soviet, giving in to pressures from the newly formed political opposition, declared Moldavian(Romanian) the official language of the Republic in September 1989. This decree was tempered by inclusion of an amendment that made Russian the language of "inter-ethnic" communications.¹⁵

¹⁴Vladimir Socor, "Popular Front Founded in Moldavia", Report on the USSR, Vol 1, 9 June 1989, Num 23: p 23.

¹⁵Vladimir Socor, "Moldavian Proclaimed Official Language in the Moldavian SSR", Report on the USSR, Vol 1, 22 September 1989, Num 38: p 13.

The elections of Spring 1990 gave the Popular Front control of about 65% of the Moldavian parliament. This parliament passed a series of laws in June of that year including: making the Romanian flag the national flag, declaring sovereignty, nationalizing the means of production, and declaring that the only Soviet laws valid in Moldova were those which had been ratified by the Republic's parliament.¹⁶ These laws caused great concern for the people who had been in control -- those Russians and Ukrainians living on the East bank.

There were two geographic regions of major conflict during the formation of the government. Both regions, the Gagauz¹⁷ region and the Dniester region declared independence in 1990. These declarations were political challenges to the new regime, much as the declaration of independence of the Crimea is to Ukraine, or the issue of Tatarstan is to Russia. There were other conflicts facing the new regime as well, including the Bulgarian majority in parts of Moldova, the issue of historic lands of Bessarabia that now belonged to Ukraine, and the large Ukrainian population in the country.

B. PRESENT POLICIES

The goal of Moldova's President Mircea Snegur has been to form an independent sovereign state. He has attempted to fulfill this goal despite all

¹⁶Dima, From Moldavia ..., p 144-147.

¹⁷The Gaguz are a small ethnic group which is concentrated in a small territory in the southern portion of the country.

opposition. He has succeeded in forming a government with independent statehood and preservation of territorial integrity as its prime objective.¹⁸ This was accomplished by carefully developing Moldova's foreign and domestic policies balancing pressures from opposition groups, both internal and external.

In general, there has been an effort not to exclude non-Moldovans from the new system. The government has structured itself "al Moldavie", i.e. of Moldavia rather than "Moldovenesc", i.e. Moldavian, to show a dedication to democracy and rights for all ethnic groups in the republic.¹⁹ To this end, the current policy of the Moldovan government is "promoting a revival of the Ukrainian, Gagauz, and Bulgarian languages and cultures in Moldova, long subject to Russification, and to encouraging (sic) Russians to renounce Soviet ideology in favor of Russian cultural traditions."²⁰ The Moldovan government is even emphasizing choice of ethnic language education in areas of substantial non-Moldovan populations.

As an example, Ukrainians make up the largest minority in the country, comprising almost 14% of the population. President Snegur has introduced Ukrainian language instruction in schools and established Ukrainian-language radio and television broadcasts. Several agreements have been signed between

¹⁸Vladimir Socor "Moldova's New "Government of National Consensus", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, 27 November 1992, Num 47.

¹⁹Socor, "Popular Front . . .", p 24.

²⁰Vladimir Socor, "Moldova Builds a New State", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, 3 January 1992, Num 1: p 43.

Moldova and Ukraine providing for cooperation in training of Ukrainian instructors. In addition, Ukrainian language and culture classes are being offered in high schools. ". . . the Moldovan government's efforts to win over its national minorities by respecting their cultural rights have been welcomed by those of Moldova's Ukrainians who have retained or are rediscovering their national identity."²¹

Since consolidating power in December of 1991, President Snegur has done everything in his power to alleviate the concerns of minorities in Moldova about their treatment and the possibility of unification. He has joined forces with such national-democratic groups as the Russian association Democratic Moldavia, the Society for Ukrainian Culture, and the Bulgarian Rebirth Society. He has committed to revitalizing the culture and national identity of minority communities.²²

Moldova's new government, completed in December of 1992, has been designated one of "national consensus". Its major platforms include ruling out any political role for the communist party, support of an elected representative governmental system, and protection of the civil rights of all people in the state. All this is in addition to the primary goal of independent statehood and territorial integrity.

²¹Nahaylo, "Ukraine and Moldova . . .", p 42.

²²Socor, "Moldavia Builds . . .", p 43-47.

This new government has attempted to reflect the ethnic composition of the country. It is not exclusively Moldovan like the early government of 1991-92, but contains ethnic Ukrainians, Russians, and Bulgarians as well as Moldovans. It even includes ministerial posts reserved for left-bank Russians should they finally decide to take part in the elected government.²³ It is truly an effort to include all people in the political process in the country.²⁴

C. THE UNIFICATION ISSUE

One of the greatest challenges for President Snegur has been to create a state from a land whose titular nationality is part of a nation which already has a state. Due to their shared heritage, Moldova and Romania have a strong bond which intertwines them. The call for unification of Moldavia and Rumania was the driving force behind Moldova's independence movement. Fear that unification would occur has been the cause of many of the problems in the Dniester and Gagauz regions of Moldova. However, not since the origination of the independence movement has there been much serious talk of unification. The Moldovan Popular Front, the leading political group endorsing unification during the initial push for separation from the Soviet Union, has lost much of its sup-

²³Vladimir Socor, "Moldova's New 'Government of National Consensus'", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, 27 November 1992 Num 47.

²⁴For a list of the people in the new government and a more specific ethnic breakout see Vladimir Socor, "Moldova's New 'Government of National Consensus'", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, No. 47, 27 November 1992.

port.²⁵ It has been reported in the Russian Weekly News Magazine, New Times, that the last public opinion poll in Moldova showed only 9 percent of the population in favor of unification.²⁶

Since early 1992, Snegur has espoused the doctrine of "one people, two states" or "two independent Romanian states cooperating with each other" to describe Moldova's relations with Romania.²⁷ This doctrine has been supported by Romania's President Ion Iliescu and most of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but has found opposition in other parts of the Romanian government.

One of the major reasons why Moldova does not seek unification with Romania is political dissension within Moldova. Moldova would lose any chance at a reasonable settlement of the Dniester conflict, and undoubtedly tension would increase among other ethnic minorities if the government pursued unification. The stated major concern of the Russians and Ukrainians, especially in the Dniester region, is fear of unification with Romania. Any movement in the direction of unification would greatly complicate the Russian-Moldovan

²⁵For a look at the changes in political preferences of Moldova's Electorate from June 1991 to February 1992, see Vladimir Socor, "Opinion Polling in Moldova", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, No. 13, 27 March 1992.

²⁶Galina Kovalskaya, "Is the Right Bank Right?", New Times, Issue 45.92, November, 1992, p 12-13.

²⁷Vladimir Socor, "Moldovan-Romanian Relations are Slow to Develop", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, 26 June 1992, Num 13.

relationship in light of these fears and the stated policy of the Russians that they will protect the Russian diaspora around the world.

This reason is followed closely by economic issues. Because of the remnants of the old Soviet command economy, Moldova's economy, predominantly agricultural, is dependent on raw materials and fuel from the other former Soviet Republics. Unification with Romania would exacerbate the existing shortages. Presently, despite economic problems, Moldova has a higher standard of living than Romania. Unification would be an economic step backward, a step more beneficial to Romania than Moldova.

There is also the political reality of the situation. President Snegur and his new government are presently in charge of a country which has been recognized by many nations and major international organizations. To unite with Romania would be to become a province in a different country. They would lose all their international prestige and power.

D. DEALINGS WITH THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES (CIS)

Moldova has taken a cautious approach to relations with the CIS. Since its inception, the CIS has been a tenuous organization at best. The individual states found themselves forced together by economic necessity. However, these states are cautious about joining a union in which the Russians predominate. In early December, Interfax quoted President Snegur, in discussing the Commonwealth charter, as saying "with every passing day, ... the desire of certain state leaders

to return to the organization of the former USSR is becoming increasingly apparent."²⁸ However, Moldova did sign the Alma-Ata protocol to create the Commonwealth in December 1991 with reservations, and became a founding member.²⁹

One of the major points of contention between Moldova and the CIS concerned military structure. Moldova was one of three republics (along with Ukraine and Azerbaijan) which insisted they be allowed to maintain their own conventional armed forces. This was a position not well received by some other members of the Commonwealth, most notably Russia. In addition to maintaining its own armed forces, Moldova refused to participate in any joint military command structure. This position caused great conflict in Moldovan-Russian relations especially regarding the Dniester conflict and the 14th Army. Moscow has repeatedly tied removal or disbandment of Russian troops in Moldova to Moldova's participation in some type of security arrangement with Russia.

Moldova's primary interest in the CIS is economic. In the early part of 1992, Moldova relied almost exclusively on the members of the CIS for raw materials and fuel. Reliance on the ruble further tied her to the Commonwealth. Even so, Moldova is trying to limit her participation in the economic sector of the

²⁸Vladimir Socor, "Moldova not to sign CIS Charter", RFE/RL Daily Report, 8 December 1991.

²⁹Ann Sheehy, "Commonwealth of Independent States: An Uneasy compromise", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, 10 January 1992, Num 2.

Commonwealth as well. Moldovan leaders acknowledge the Commonwealth is a necessary, albeit hopefully temporary, economic reality for the country. They have stated they will make every effort to transition from the CIS to the European Community as quickly as possible.³⁰ Moldova has established trade protocols with other members of the world community, Bulgaria, Kuwait, Romania, and the United States to name a few.

Moldova has also used the CIS as a forum for protesting Russia activities in the Dniester region. They have called for the CIS military to intervene in the conflict as peacekeepers in concert with United Nations troops. Most recently Moldova has tied her membership in the CIS to Ukraine's membership. In November, Snegur was reported to have said that Moldova shared Ukraine's concern over the "new centralism" developing in CIS economic and political actions. He stated that Moldova does not intend to sign the CIS charter if Ukraine does not sign.³¹

³⁰Vladimir Socor, "Moldova", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, 14 February 1992, Num 7: p 11.

³¹Vladimir Socor, "Moldovan President Support Ukraine's stand in the CIS", RFE/RL Daily Report, 1 December, 1992.

IV. THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT AND FORMATION OF FOREIGN POLICY

A. NATIONAL INTEREST

In the Soviet period, foreign policy of the Soviet Union was steered by Communist ideology. With the loss of this ideology, the Russian government needs to find a replacement; national interest seems a logical choice. Therefore, Russia's first priority in formulating a foreign policy is to determine her national interest. While this may sound rather simple, there is no consensus as to what the national interest of Russia is, or should be.

The term national interest creates its own problems for the Russian government. Before you can determine the interest of a nation, the nation must be defined. A general definition of a nation is a grouping of people who consider themselves as being linked to one another in some manner. This could be culturally, ethnically, or linguistically.³² But, in Russia, there is a problem with defining the Russian nation. There are those like Alexander Solzhenitsyn who

³²Daniel S. Papp, Contemporary International Relations, 3rd ed. (New York: MacMillan, 1991), 27.

would include Ukrainians and Byelorussians as Russian.³³ But Ukrainians and Byelorussians consider themselves to be separate and independent nations, with separate and independent national interests. They also have no interest in being part of the Russian state or in being considered part of the Russian nation.

While defining who is actually a Russian may seem somewhat unimportant, it plays a vital role in Russia's relationships. One of few statements of national interest and foreign policy to come from the Russian Foreign Ministry is that Russia will protect Russian nationals, and Russian speaking people, in other parts of the world. In Moldova, the 14th Army is using the excuse of protecting Ukrainian who are Russian speakers as well as Russian as justification for remaining in Moldova.³⁴ While this may just be a political excuse for the troops ongoing involvement in the fighting, it also shows that the Russian nation has yet to be defined, and the definition could play a critical role in Russia relations. By not condemning the 14th Army's renegade activity, Russian government seems to be indicating tacit approval of a broader definition of "being Russian".

³³In his book Rebuilding Russia, Reflections and Tentative Reforms, Solzhenitsyn makes the statement "All the talk of a Separate Ukrainian people existing since something like the ninth century and possessing its own non-Russian language is a recently invented falsehood." Statements like this indicate a particular difficulty in defining the Russian nation, not to mention the Russian state.

³⁴Suzanne Crow, "Russian Moderates Walk a Tightrope on Moldova", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, No. 20, 15 May 1992, p 10-11.

Russia is attempting to determine its national interest like any state would, through internal governmental debate which takes history and culture into consideration. The problems they face include the change in geographic size, political orientation, the rising nationalities problem, the reduced world stature, and reduced military strength which was the primary instrument used to protect national interest in the past. The debate on national interest has been underway in the Russian Parliament since early 1992.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin has stated "Like everyone [the Russian people] are interested in concrete guarantees of the rights and freedoms of citizens and human beings in accordance with international rules."³⁵ In more specific terms, Yeltsin says there is a need to develop better relations with western countries while having good relations with the other members of the Commonwealth.

Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev has stated that national interest should be dealt with on a situational basis rather than by formulating abstract concepts. Kozyrev also is a proponent of bringing the Russian people into the national interest debate. He has called for "a need to form an enlightened public opinion" in order to help the parliament with the current debate on national interest.³⁶

³⁵ITAR-TASS, 17 June 1992, as reported in "Russia Debates Its National Interests", Suzanne Crow, RFE/RL Research Report, Vo 1, 10 July 1992, Num 28: p 43.

³⁶Nezavisimaya gazeta, 1 April 1992, as reported in Crow, "Russia Debates ..." p 44.

This struggle to identify Russian national interest will be a long and difficult one. It is obvious that Russia cannot wait until its national interests are clearly defined before making foreign policy decision. By the same token, we in the West should expect some changes in Russian policy as national identity and interests become more clearly defined in the country.

B. RUSSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

The breakup of the Soviet Union has forced Moscow to re-evaluate its position in the world. Russia is no longer a super power, but is it still a great power, and if not, should it strive to be? According to Yeltsin,

"Russia is rightfully a great power by virtue of its history, of its place in the world, and of its material and spiritual potential." (Bois Yeltsin at the Sixth Session of the Congress of People's Deputies) He also said that the "work to strengthen international position ... by no means amounts to an attempt to usurp the role of superpower that once claimed to decide the world's fate."³⁷

Russia is the largest country in world in land area and sixth largest in population. It still has nuclear weapons. Russia is blessed with an abundance of key natural resources such as oil, gold, and timber which are needed on the international market. On all of these counts and still more Russia is a great power, but how does that fit in with its new place in the world and how does it effect its relations with the other countries of the world?

³⁷Suzanne Crow, "Yeltsin on Foreign Policy", FBIS Daily Report, 8 April 1992.

Russia is no longer a premier European power, controlling the East bloc with an iron fist and secure in geographic separation from its enemies. Russia is now trying to integrate into a European community it is geographically separated from. And Russia now has borders with eight new countries, some of which view Russia as hostile to their sovereignty. In the past the borders around the Soviet Union were closed and closely guarded. Now, mainly due to economic considerations, the leadership must attempt to develop borders which are "transparent" and "penetrable" with the former Union republics. These new states and border also physically separate Russia from Western Europe which reduces her role in European affairs.³⁸

The Theses for the Report of the Foreign and Defense Policy Council (FDPC) in Russia released in August 1992 recognizes that "A reduced resource, power, and geo-political base in defense and foreign policy drastically curtails possibilities of influencing the outside world and all other countries."³⁹ This is a major discovery for the state which claims successor rights to a country whose leaders previous controlled a major portion of the globe.

• ³⁸Sergei Rakovsky, "New Neighbors, New Problems", New Times, August 1992, p 19.

³⁹"Report: "Some Theses for the Report of the Foreign and Defense Policy Council", Nezavisimaya Gazeta, in Russian 19 August 1992, p 4,5 as reported in "Document Presents Theses of Council", FBIS-USR-92-115, 8 September 1992, p 55.

Current policy in Russia is driven by domestic necessity more than anything else. Internal economic reforms must come about if the present government hopes to remain in power. These reforms dictate, in many ways, the tone of Russia's foreign policy. But as German Diligenski, a political scientist puts it "[Russian] Foreign policy has become hostage to domestic policy, this is merely a temporary retreat not a surrender"⁴⁰

Foreign policy in Russia is driven not just by her relations with the states of the former Union, but also by a need to develop new, non-confrontational relations with the West. The major foreign policy discussion in Russia these days is more likely to be whether to put emphasis on relations with the West or the Near Abroad vice how to deal with specific problems in either region.

In early 1992, because of domestic economic requirements, primary foreign policy emphasis seemed to be on developing relations with the West. Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev defended this policy by saying

The most important thing was to prevent Russia from dropping out of international relations as a result of the disintegration of the USSR, and that was a real danger. We know from Soviet Russia's experience after 1917 how this could have happened.⁴¹

⁴⁰German Diligenski, "Russia Lives Cheerfully from Session to Session...", Literaturnaya Gazeta, 23 Sep 92, p 1-2, as reported in "Opposition Attacks on Foreign Policy Noted", FBIS-USR-92-128, 7 October 1992, p 58-59.

⁴¹Andrei Kozyrev, "Soyuz ostavil Rossii plokhoie vneshne-politicheskoe nasledstvo" [The Union Left Russia a Bad Foreign Policy Legacy], Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 1 April 1992 as reported in Suzanne Crow, "Russia's Relations with Members of the Commonwealth" RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, 8 May 1992, Num 19: p 9.

The above could easily lead one to the conclusion that Kozyrev does not view relations with the countries of the former USSR as "International" relations.

Russia is dependent on good relations with the West to insure it gets the needed aid. An improvement in her relations with her new neighbors, while essential for national security, offers little in the way of substantial return.⁴² This is not to say that Russia can neglect relations with the Near Abroad. While positive relations may not appear to help Russia, negative relations could seriously affect not just foreign aid but international position and prestige. The Russian government seemed to come to this realization quickly. By late spring they began to try and develop improved relations with the former republics. This was also an effort to clear up disputes over Soviet assets and debt. Given all these problems, the current government of Russia is pursuing a two track foreign policy program -- one for the Near Abroad and one for the rest of the world.

C. POLICY TOWARD THE NEAR ABROAD

The goal of Russian policy toward what it calls the Near Abroad has been under question since the break-up of the Soviet Union. Is the Russian government trying to maintain control over these countries through the CIS? How will it deal with the economic and military issues which currently tie these nations

⁴²Suzanne Crow, "Russian Federation Faces Foreign Policy Dilemmas", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, 6 March 1992, Num 10: p 15.

together? Can it, or will it, treat these former "republics" as independent sovereign countries?

In February, Kozyrev said that while Russia respected the sovereignty of the newly-formed states, Russia would strictly defend its own interests. (Recall that Russia's interests are still in a state of flux as described in Section A of this chapter.) He then went on to define Russian interests as including not only economic ties but preservation of "a unified army, ... and the protection of the Russian and the Russian speaking population in other CIS states."⁴³

Ednan Agayev, advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation said, "It is in the interest of Russia to create truly mutually beneficial relations with all the states now belonging to the CIS and not to permit their deterioration."⁴⁴ Additionally, in the report of the Foreign and Defense Policy Council (FDPC) a statement noted that "It is quite obvious that the main challenges to Russia's security are generated within the country, on the territory of the former USSR."⁴⁵ This again points to an inclusion of all the territory of the former USSR as part of Russia's "country".

⁴³Ibid p 19.

⁴⁴"National Interests, Priorities in Foreign Policy Viewed" (text), Moskovskiye Novosti, in Russian, 3 May 1992, trans. by FBIS, FBIS Daily Report, (FBIS-USR-92-083, 3 July 1992), p 1-2.

⁴⁵"Document Presents ..." p 55.

Moscow first attempted to deal with Russian concerns by trying to formulate a CIS structure which gave her pre-eminence. The Russian government quickly realized that the other countries involved in the CIS, most notably Ukraine, were unwilling to join an organization with Russia in the prime leadership role. Ukraine insisted on amendments which would guarantee territorial integrity should they decide to leave the organization. It was only because of the "looseness" of the organization that Armenia, Moldova, and Azerbaijan decided to join.⁴⁶

The military structure of the Commonwealth is another area where the interests of Russia seem to be in conflict with many of the other countries. There was a perceived fear in the non-Russian republics that a "united Commonwealth armed forces" would be nothing more than a restructured Russian Army.⁴⁷ Some countries' refusal to participate in the military structure of the CIS limited its strength even more.

As Moscow began to realize that it would not be able to meet its foreign policy goals via the watered down structure of the CIS, it started to emphasize bilateral ties with the countries of the Near Abroad, both those in and outside the CIS. In April, Foreign Minister Kozyrev made a tour to some of the countries in

⁴⁶Ann Sheehy, "Commonwealth of Independent States: An Uneasy Compromise", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, 10 January 1992, Num 2: p 2.

⁴⁷Andrei Kortunov, Strategic Relations Between The Former Soviet Republics, (The Heritage Foundation, Washington D.C.), 18 April, 1992.

the CIS most strongly opposed to the unified armed forces. He also visited Georgia, which is not even a member of the Commonwealth.⁴⁸

Kozyrev's trip started the day after his statement that Russia would protect the interests of Russians in other states. His first stops were in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Moldova, all areas of open conflict. During this trip Kozyrev proposed Russian mediation of the Azeri-Armenian conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and use of the 14th Army as a peacekeeping force in Moldova.⁴⁹ (This was just after it was resubordinated from CIS to Russian control.)

In July, the Russian Security Council recommended establishing a new ministry to deal strictly with CIS affairs. Sergei Stankevich, an advocate of the new ministry claimed that "the CIS calls for a special and independent sphere of Russian foreign policy." Opponents claimed that the new ministry would suggest that Russia viewed these countries as different than the rest of the world, as second-class countries, less sovereign than other countries.⁵⁰ Even though the

⁴⁸It should be noted that Ukraine, the country Russia was having the most trouble with, was not on Kozyrev's itinerary. This was the time of some of the greatest stress in Russian-Ukrainian relations. Kozyrev was no doubt trying to make the appearance of unity with the other countries despite problems with Ukraine. This was no doubt an effort to show that Russia was still the leader of the countries of the former Union. While Russia made have been having problems with Ukraine it still was the greatest power in the region and had the support of the other countries.

⁴⁹Suzanne Crow, "Russia's Relations .." p 10.

⁵⁰Suzanne Crow, "Russia Prepares to Take a Hard Line On 'Near Abroad'", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, 4 August 1992, Num 32: p 21-32.

new ministry was never created, the disagreement about its creation is symptomatic of the ongoing debate about the overall direction of Russian policy toward the "Near Abroad" taking place in the Russian foreign policy bureaucracy.

The FDPC report also recommend Russia take an "enlightened post-imperial course" in regard to the "countries on the territory of the former USSR". The report points out that historically the state building process has been accompanied by a series of wars and says "the main task of Russian security strategy will be ... to settle conflicts on the territory of the former USSR." The goal of this policy, according to the report, is to avoid wars and conflicts and control the transformation of the former USSR to include "the reintegration of a substantial portion of the former USSR...".⁵¹

The future of Russia's policy toward the Near Abroad seems to be headed away from the moderate position advocated by Kozyrev and headed toward a more hard line position. The power of the Foreign Ministry is being diluted by the attempts of Russian Security Council and the FDPC to influence foreign policy. Both of these organizations are gaining an increasingly important role in the foreign policy arena. The increasing power of the National Patriotic Forces in the Russian government seems to guarantee more conservative policies in all areas. This is especially true in foreign relations and even more so in relations,

⁵¹"Document Present Thesis ..." FBIS-USR-92-115 p 58-62.

whether defined as foreign or domestic, with the countries of the former Soviet Union.

V. THE DNIESTER CONFLICT

A. DEFINING THE RELATIONSHIP

The relationship between the Russian government and the Moldovan government has several facets, but it generally revolves around the conflict in the Dniester region of Moldova. The Dniester region is an area of land on the East Bank of the Dniester River whose government is rebelling against the elected Moldovan government of President Snegur.

The people in the Dniester region, although they call themselves Moldavian, do not share the Romanian historical culture with the rest of the country. They have Slavic, Russian and/or Ukrainian roots. The Moldovans on the east bank generally do not speak Moldovan. It can also be said that a great many of the Ukrainians on the left bank do not speak Ukrainian. The Russian speaking majority in the major cities on the east bank is almost 50% Ukrainian.⁵²

The current government in what they call the Dniester Republic is comprised mostly of the people who controlled the Moldavian SSR under the Soviet regime. It is comprised from the remnants of the communist party in Moldova. The communist party in present day Moldova is virtually non-existent, not for political reasons, but rather because no one west of the Dniester supports

⁵²Nahaylo, "Ukraine and Moldova . . ." p 41.

it. It was declared illegal after the communist government in the Dniester voiced strong support for the August 1991 coup in the Soviet Union. This was mostly just an administrative move. Its only proponents are those on the east bank. These people are some of the most hard core communists anywhere. How hard core are these people? "... there are two strongholds of socialism left in the world -- Cuba and the Dniester area."⁵³ There are some questions whether those in the Dniester area are really that strongly communist or if they are using communism as a cover for their Russian nationalism.

Of roughly 750,000 people in the Transdnister, 17% of the population of Moldova, the population is approximately 56% Slavic⁵⁴, split about equally between Russian and Ukrainian. Moldovans are still in the majority, but, as explained earlier, this statistic is misleading because many of these people who call themselves Moldovan are ancestral Russian or Ukrainian. These people on the east bank are the people who suffered the most under the three years of Romanian leadership of Moldavia (1941-1944). They are very fearful of what would happen to them if Moldova unites with Romania.

The area east of the Dniester River is also the industrial heart of Moldova. The region, in the typical Soviet fashion of centralized control and production,

⁵³Igor Rotar, "There are Two Socialist Strongholds in the World: Cuba and the Dniester Area. The Political Situation in Moldova Remains Explosive." Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 6 June 91, p 3, as translated and reprinted in "Political Unrest Divides Republic", FBIS-USR-91-015, 19 July 1991, p 57.

⁵⁴Ibid, p 58.

produces 34% of the vegetables, 33% of the industrial products, and 56% of the consumer products. It also contains the power plant, major transportation links and major means of transporting energy.⁵⁵ Finally, it is home to the 14th Army of the Russian military.

The conflict in the region originated as a result of non-Moldovans' fear that Moldova would unify with Romanian. Given the history of violent conflict between Russians and Romanians in the region the Russians felt there was an excellent chance they would be oppressed under Romanian rule.⁵⁶ The conflict between the rebels and the Moldovan government escalated in August 1991 when the leaders of the Dniester region supported those attempting the coup in the Soviet Union. Sporadically throughout 1992, armed conflict was waged between the Russian supported rebels and the Moldovan government. It is through this conflict that the tone of Russian-Moldovan relations has been set.

The leadership of the Dniester Republic had hoped to get help in their uprising from the hard-liners in the Soviet government. With the failed coup in 1991, and the rise of a more moderate Yeltsin government their uprising

⁵⁵Ibid, p 58.

⁵⁶In an interview in an Ukrainian newspaper in May 1992 Snegur said that the Dniester separatism was conceived by the Kremlin. He stated that when Moldova refused to sign the Union treaty Gorbachev said Moldova will never be able to solve its problems with the Dniester and Gagauz Republics. Uilnu Ukrayinu, in Ukrainian, 2 May, 1992 as reported in "Snegur Interviewed on Dniester Conflict", FBIS Daily Report, Central Eurasia, FBIS-USR-92-073, 17 June 1992, p 67-71.

appeared in trouble. In fact, it was after the failed coup that the leaders of a similar style conflict in the Gagauz region of Moldova reached agreement with the Moldovan government on terms for resolution of their uprising. They did seemingly find friends in the Yeltsin government however, and the conflict intensified.⁵⁷ The relationship between Moldova and Russia in this matter developed along three major axes; Russian support for the insurgents, the role of the 14th Army in the uprising, and the peace process.

B. RUSSIAN SUPPORT FOR THE INSURGENTS

The Moldovan government strongly believes the insurgency is getting the full support of the Russian government.⁵⁸ The Russian government officially denied sending mercenaries to Moldova in April 1992.⁵⁹ At the same time, it reaffirmed Russia's right to protect "the rights of Russians in other states of the [CIS] ... using powerful methods if needed."⁶⁰ While this may not have been a statement of support, it did nothing to ease the tensions in the region. Throug-

⁵⁷A complete review of the Dniester problem would be a paper in and of itself. For information on the details of the early part of the conflict itself I recommend "Creeping Putsch in Eastern Moldova", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, 17 January 1992, Num 3.

⁵⁸See Moldovan President Snegur's comments in footnote 54.

⁵⁹Suzanne Crow, "Russia Denies it sent Mercenaries to Moldova", FBIS Daily Report, 15 April 1992.

⁶⁰Andrea Kozyrev in Nezavisimaya gazeta, as reported by Suzanne Crow, "Russia will protect the rights of Russians" FBIS Daily Report, 2 April 1992.

hout the spring and summer President Snegur called for official Russian government pressure on the Dniester authorities, but none was forthcoming. Despite Russia's denial of sending mercenaries, large numbers of Cossacks and other former Soviet military personnel were reported in the Dniester region and other Russian mercenaries headed from Russia to Moldova had been apprehended by Ukrainian authorities. Additionally, the Russian government has officially granted the Dniester republic several billion rubles in aid and quantities of materials and foodstuffs throughout 1992 despite shortages at home.

Russian involvement in the Dniester region was widely debated both in and out of government circles. The view of the hard-liners was expressed by Russian Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoi. Rutskoi stressed the independent existence of the Dniester republic, and recommended the Russian Congress vote to support the population on the left bank, which it did on 8 April 1992. The view of the moderates was set forth by Foreign Minister Kozyrev who called for Moldova's territorial integrity, and agreed to meetings with Moldova, Romanian, Ukraine and Russia to try and solve the situation. Both moderates and hard-liners did agree that the 14th Army should be used as a peacekeeping force in the region, something no one else approved of.⁶¹

⁶¹Suzanne Crow, "Russian Moderates Walk a Tightrope on Moldova", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1 15 May 1992, Num 20: p 11.

While Russia is giving no overt military aid to the Dniester insurgents, there is a report in an August issue of the Moscow journal Sobesedinik which describes aid to the region.

... Aid is being given behind the scenes. Employees of Russia's Ministry of Internal Affairs are serving in the Dniester Battalion, the OMON's equivalent in the Dniester republic. The Russian government pretends not to see when Russian factories sell to Tiraspol firearms and military vehicles written off as part of conversion. The Dniester banks are connected to the outside through accounts in the Russian Central Bank. Volunteers from Russia and not only Cossacks are fighting in various armed formations [of the "Dniester" forces] without the Russian procuracy charging them with crimes.⁶²

Even if Russia, as they claim, has not been providing direct military aid to the insurgency, they have been resupplying the 14th Army, which has apparently been supplying the insurgents. The Russians have undeniably provided moral and political support to the insurgents. Russia's unwillingness to apply pressure on the insurgents, her continued calls for use of the Russian army as a peacekeeping force, and statements by Russian government official all provide support for the insurgents. Foreign Minister Kozyrev, who had previously supported a moderate view, when asked in June about potential outcomes for the region said he would not rule out the Dniester area some day becoming a part of Russia.⁶³

⁶²Vladimir Socor, "Russian aid to "Dniester" Insurgency Described", FBIS Daily Report, 4 September 1992.

⁶³Vladimir Socor, "Kozyrev's Territorial Claims Protested By Moldova" FBIS Daily Report, 16 June 1992.

C. THE ROLE OF THE 14TH ARMY IN THE INSURGENCY

The fact that the 14th Army has an important role in the conflict in the Dniester is beyond question. There are those who claim that the insurgency in the area would have been inconceivable without the support of the 14th Army.⁶⁴ The question remains: is the 14th Army, in their support of the government of the Dniester region, acting with the advice and consent of the Russian government?

Since the beginning of the independent government of Moldova, the 14th Army has been politically and militarily in opposition to it. As early as December 1991 the commanding general of the 14th Army, Lieutenant General Gennadii Yakovlev, accepted the position of Chief of Defense for the "Dniester Republic" and placed 14th Army troops and equipment at the disposal of that government.⁶⁵ This was at least partially in response to the Moldovan government's attempts to reduce the privileged status and preferential treatment the military had received under the communists. The 14th Army leadership, along with the rest of the leadership of the Dniester region, supported the August 1991 coup attempt. In addition to being against the government of Moldova, the 14th Army leadership has had disagreement with the Yeltsin government. It is the

⁶⁴Vladimir Socor, "Russia's Fourteenth Army and the Insurgency in Eastern Moldova", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, 11 September 1992, Num 36: p 41.

⁶⁵Vladimir Socor, "Creeping Putsch in Eastern Moldova", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, 17 January 1992, Num 3: p 9.

army leadership's somewhat antagonistic attitude for the moderate policies of the Yeltsin government that bring into question whether the army's actions are sanctioned by the Russian government.

In April 1992, Russian President Boris Yeltsin placed the 14th Army under Russian jurisdiction rather than under CIS jurisdiction in an effort to try and regain control over the unraveling military situation in the region.⁶⁶ Yeltsin replaced Gen. Yakovlev with Major General Aleksandr Lebed in June in a further effort to maintain control. However, Gen. Lebed has been even more outspoken than Gen. Yakovlev in opposition to most of Yeltsin's democratization policies since being appointed. There are reports that Lebed's appointment was pushed through channels by the Russian Security Council, against Yeltsin's wishes.⁶⁷

Lebed has done nothing to calm the situation, and many of his comments have even aggravated it. In July, he was outspokenly critical of Yeltsin's policies toward Moldova and claimed Moldovan President Snegur was "negotiating with Yeltsin only in order to mislead public opinion, while in reality preparing for war."⁶⁸ Lebed has been warned against making political statements on a recurring basis since his appointment but he has slowed his rhetoric little. In late

⁶⁶Celestine Bohlen, "Russian Takes Over Command of Army in Moldova", NY Times, April 2 1992, p A 7.

⁶⁷Alexander Rahr, "The Power of the Russian Security Council" RFE/RL Daily Report, 5 August 1992.

⁶⁸Bohdan Nahaylo, "National Ferment In Moldavia", Radio Liberty Research Report, Vol 32, 24 January 1988: p 4.

August Gen. Lebed was again reprimanded for his attacks on the elected Moldovan government, claiming that it was fascist and criminal. According to reports he was told this type of comment undermines Yeltsin's policy and fuels "an explosive situation" in the area.⁶⁹

14th Army military support for the insurgency is one of the more complicated issues in the area. Originally, when Moldova did not join the military structure of the CIS, Snegur called for all of the former Soviet military forces and equipment in the country to be transferred to Moldova. In March, after negotiations with the CIS, Moldova was given control of non-strategic forces on the right side of the Dniester, but the forces on the left bank were left for future negotiations.⁷⁰ These future negotiations with the CIS were never held because Moscow took control of the major forces on the left bank, the 14th Army, in April.

There is no official Russian documentation showing any arms transfers from the 14th Army to the Dniester rebels, however it is almost inconceivable that a government which did not previously exist could arm its troops with tanks, APCs, and mortars in addition to small arms and heavy machine guns so quickly without help. President Yeltsin denied that the 14th Army was giving equipment

⁶⁹Vladimir Socor, "Lebed Again Cautioned Against Political Statements", RFE/RL Daily Report, 1 September 1992.

⁷⁰Vladimir Socor, "Russian Forces in Moldova", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, 28 August 1992, Num 34: p 39.

to the insurgents but he did admit "Unquestionably, there are supporters of the Dniester region among the 14th Army's officer corps, and they are beginning to switch over, sometimes with equipment, to the side of the Dniester people."⁷¹

Moldova's Ministry of National Security released data showing that the 14th Army was being resupplied with types and quantities of equipment which seem to reflect the losses in battle of the insurgent forces. This resupply of equipment is even more interesting when taken in conjunction with the 14th Army's manning status. According to sources in Russia's Ministry of Defense and in the CIS, referring to the 14th Army, "Its armament and [armored] vehicles are those of a full-fledged army, ... its officers and NCOs would barely suffice for a regular motorized rifle division."⁷² The plan had been for the forces to be augmented by the large number of military retirees living on the left bank.

Despite the standing claim of the Russian government that the 14th Army is a neutral force there have been reports from Russian Defense Ministry spokesmen, Yeltsin's advisor on nationalities, and Sergei Stankevich that units of the 14th Army have participated in the fighting. These reports are often minimized by accompanying statements that the actions were in self-defence, or

⁷¹Interview with Yeltsin in Komsomolskaya pravda, 27 May 1992, as cited in Vladimir Socor, "Russia's 14th Army ...", p 45.

⁷²Izvestiya, 29 May 1992, as cited by Socor "Russian Forces ..." p 40.

unauthorized, or actions of individual units. No disciplinary action has been taken against any officer of the army because of these unauthorized activities.⁷³

There is some question as to how much control the government in Moscow has over the 14th Army. The army appears to be supporting the Dniester Republic government in every possible way, providing equipment and men where needed. They are allowing those who are leaving the army to join the official Dniester Republican Guard to take their weapons, large and small, with them. The leadership of the army is actively supportive of the insurgent government and actively antagonistic toward the elected government of Moldova. There are those who would say it has, in all but name, become the Dniester Republican Guard.

D. THE DNIESTER PEACE PROCESS

The majority of the diplomatic relations between Russia and Moldova in the past several months have revolved around finding a peaceful solution to the Dniester problem. Both governments have made peace in the region a major policy objective. The original proposal was for a quadripartite, Russian-Ukrainian-Moldovan-Romanian, organization to look at the problem, but quickly Russia decided they were only interested in bipartite, Russian-Moldovan talks.⁷⁴

⁷³Socor "Russia's 14th Army ..." p 47.

⁷⁴Bohdan Nahaylo "Russia Seeking to Keep Ukraine and Romania out of Negotiations on Moldovan Conflict" RFE/RL Daily Report, 3 June 1992.

There have been a series of agreements between the two proclaiming cease-fires and attempting to establish peacekeeping forces. A major stumbling block is the composition of the peacekeeping forces. Moldova prefers that the peacekeeping force be made up of CIS, CSCE or UN troops, Russia insists that the peacekeepers be Russian troops. If not the 14th Army, which is unacceptable to everyone except Russia and the Dniester government, then other Russian troops should be brought in. Ultimately, this is what happened. Moldova agreed to allow additional Russian troops in the country as peacekeepers in a desperate effort to end the fighting. The Russians were the Moldovan's last choice but neither the UN nor CSCE were willing to send troop while the fighting was ongoing.⁷⁵

In July, the first peacemaking forces comprised of 3,800 Russian, 1,200 Moldovan, and 1,200 "Dniester" troops began to take up positions in the conflict zone.⁷⁶ However, only 3 days later, President Snegur was calling for UN observers because of "profound concern and raising doubts about the other side's sincerity."⁷⁷ The peacekeeping force did result in a decline in armed confrontation between Moldovan and Dniesterian forces, but at the same time it allowed

⁷⁵Suzanne Crow "The theory and Practice of Peacekeeping in the Former USSR" RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, 18 September 1992, Num 37: p 35.

⁷⁶Crow "The Theory ..." p 35. and Vladimir Socor, "Peacemaking Forces Deployed in Moldova" RFE/RL Daily Report, Vol 1, 30 July 1992, Num 30.

⁷⁷Vladimir Socor "Moldovan President appeals to UN", RFE/RL Daily Report, 3 August 1992.

the Dniester government to consolidate its governmental power and create official government ministries. Moldova has continuously registered complaints with the Russian government about the actions of the Dniester government under the protection of the peacekeepers but the protests have fallen on deaf ears.

Russian officials say that the peacekeeping effort in Moldova falls under the auspices of a CIS force despite the fact that no CIS peacekeeping force exists. Additionally, the forces seem to ignore basic principles established in the CIS peacekeeping guidelines agreed to in March 1992. These guidelines dictate forces will not be introduced into areas where there is active conflict and the states contributing the forces should not represent states involved in the conflict.⁷⁸

E. TALKS ON WITHDRAWAL OF RUSSIAN TROOPS

Russia's activities in the Dniester peacekeeping process seem to indicate a country which is unwilling to give up her hope for empire and is willing to use any excuse to place and keep troops in the former republics. Moldova's efforts to negotiate the withdrawal of Russian troops from her soil have suffered a set back because of her unwillingness to bow to Russian demands. Now, not only is the 14th Army in place, but 3,800 additional Russian troops have been brought in as peacekeepers. Russia has used the peacekeeping process to increase her hold on Moldova and is stifling Moldova's efforts to internationalize the

⁷⁸Crow "The Theory ..." p 36.

peacekeeping process. Additionally, Russia is linking the issue of troop withdrawal to Moldova's participation in the CIS structure.

During the round of talks on the future of Russian troops in Moldova held in August, Russia's position was that the troops were needed for defense of areas of the former USSR as long as there was no formal agreement on the prospect of military cooperation between the two states. This ties the issue of Russian troops directly to Moldova's unwillingness to be a part of the military structure of the CIS. Additionally, the Russians have called for a disbanding, rather than a withdrawal, of troops. This would allow the troops mustered out of the Russian Army not to be transferred back to Russia but to stay in the area and join the Dniester forces if they choose. This latest disagreement has stalled the bilateral talks and Russia is unwilling to support moderation by any other country or organization insisting this issue is solely between Russian and Moldova.⁷⁹

⁷⁹Vladimir Socor, "Moldova Facing Russian Pressure", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, 15 December 1992, Num 52.

VI. THE EFFECTS OF RUSSIA ON MOLDOVA'S OTHER INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

A. EFFECTS ON RELATIONS WITH ROMANIA

Despite their shared heritage, Moldova seems to have made an effort to put distance between herself and Romania. This is in part due to Moldova's wish for an independent sovereign state, as discussed in chapter III. It is also in part due to Russian pressure on Moldova not to develop close ties with Romania. Russia's goal seems to be to keep Moldova from developing overly close ties with Romania. As chapter II pointed out, there is great animosity between Romanians and Russians, especially in regard to this region. Additionally, Russia wants to keep her relations with Moldova strictly between her and Moldova with no outside interference.

In the summer, Russia seemed willing to have Romania, and even Ukraine, take part in the talks designed to promote peace in the Dniester area. During the initial talks in July, Romania offered to "financially back the withdrawal of the 14th Army from the republic of Moldova" and to help with the cost of housing the displaced soldiers in Russia.⁸⁰ This was not the solution the Russians were looking for, even though the expense of moving the troops was one of the

⁸⁰Michael Shafir, "Iliescu: EBRD would back Russian Withdrawal from Moldova." RFE/RL Daily Report, 17 July 1992.

reasons for leaving them in place. Shortly after declining this offer, Russia insisted Romania be excluded from any future peace negotiations.

Moldova still seeks some assistance from Romania in dealing with the problems in the Dniester region, as well as in gaining international recognition and support. Romania has been Moldova's greatest champion in the international arena, constantly trying to focus world attention on Russian activities in the Dniester Region. The relationship developing between Romania and Moldova in response to the conflict is in some ways beginning to resemble a security relationship.⁸¹ In fact, Moldova and Rumania signed a bilateral military agreement in December 1992. The agreement provides for Romanian help to train and arm Moldovan forces as well as promoting cultural and scientific contacts between the two countries' armed forces.⁸²

Romanian Foreign Minister Adrian Nastase has said that Romania will strive to keep Moldova in its sphere of influence if unification does not happen.⁸³ However, in October 1992, Secretary of State at the Romanian Foreign Affairs Ministry told correspondents that formal Moldovan entry into the CIS would make it very difficult to maintain the type of relationship that Bucharest hoped

⁸¹Vladimir Socor, "Moldovan-Romanian Relations ..." p 42.

⁸²Dan Ionescu, "Romania, Moldova Sign Military Agreement", RFE/RL Daily Report, 16 December 1992.

⁸³Vladimir Socor, "Romanian foreign Minister On 'Lack of Signals' from Moldova", RFE/RL Daily Report, 15 September 1992.

would result from the existence of "two independent Romanian-speaking states".⁸⁴ Russia's insistence that Moldova increase involvement in the CIS before any substantive troop withdrawal talks take place is an attempt to isolate Moldova from her neighbor and natural supporter, Romania.

B. EFFECTS ON RELATIONS WITH UKRAINE

Initial Ukrainian reaction to the problems in Moldova was one which showed a lack of concern. Moldova had advanced some claims against Ukrainian territory which did cause some concern in Ukraine but little was done about the issue. Despite the large number of Ukrainians at risk in the Dniester region Ukraine did not take a strong stance on either side. Until Ukraine had stabilized its own situation it could not afford to offend Russia to any great extent because of the large number of Russian troops still in Ukraine. Ukraine was already involved in a number of disputes with Russia and had to deal with the secessionist movement in the Crimea. These issues occupied most of the time of the fledgling Ukrainian government. It didn't have time for Moldova's problems, problems which only effected it indirectly.

However, by March, the situation in the Dniester republic began to draw serious attention from Ukraine. Russian troops and mercenaries were traversing Ukraine to get to access the conflict. The 14th Army was using the excuse of

⁸⁴Michael Shafir, "Romanian Official on Relations with Moldova.", RFE/RL Daily Report, October 14, 1992.

defending the rights of Ukrainians in the region as justification for their actions. Ukraine began to issue statements condemning Russian activity in the Dniester region. They also reserved the right to take actions to protect Ukrainians in the area.⁸⁵ Despite Russia's wish to keep the problem in the Dniester between her and Moldova, Ukraine offered to act as a moderator in the peace talks. It was one of the group of four countries Russia originally agreed to allow to participate in the peace process, but was later excluded.

As Ukrainian officials talked to the Ukrainians in the Dniester, they found these people would be willing to live under Moldovan rule. Since the development of the "two state" policy between Romania and Moldova, the Ukrainians in the Dniester had more trouble with the Russians than with the Moldovans. There are even Radio Kiev reports that Ukrainians in the Dniester region have claimed that the tension there was "artificially" created and that the Ukrainians are being used by "outside forces" in a struggle to obstruct "Moldova's national revival and the establishment of its independence".⁸⁶

Despite earlier troubled times over the treatment of Ukrainians in the Dniester region, the relationship between Moldova and Ukraine has developed as one between two equals. In October, the presidents of the two countries signed a "treaty of good neighborliness, friendship and cooperation." This treaty

⁸⁵Nahaylo, "Moldovan conflict ..." p 2-3.

⁸⁶Radio Kiev, 31 March 1992, as reported by Bohdan Nahaylo, "Ukraine and Moldova ...", p 45.

included agreements for transit routes for trade, observance of the rights of Moldovans in Ukraine and Ukrainians in Moldova, as well as restrictions on the transit of armed groups hostile to one side on the territory of the other.⁸⁷ This last item is especially important to restrict the resupply of the 14th Army and to limit mercenaries crossing Ukraine to fight in Moldova. There was an additional agreement to respect the territorial integrity of the two states and not to raise territorial issues resulting from the second world war.

Ukraine's interest in the Dniester conflict goes beyond the surface. Ukraine must be careful not to let Russia gain a base for its forces along Ukraine's Southwest border. Should Russian-Ukrainian relations sour, the 14th Army could cause a major problem for Ukraine if the army remains in Moldova. It may be better for Ukraine to stop the 14th Army now, while it is turned toward Moldova, rather than wait to see what the future holds.

Moldova and Ukraine have the potential for strained relations because of the possibility of territorial disputes resulting from the creation of the Moldavian SSR as explained in chapter II. Additionally, if the government of Moldova were to have a restrictive ethnic policy, it would effect Ukraine tremendously because Ukrainians are the largest non-Moldovan ethnic group in the country. However, differences between the two have been set aside as they united in fighting a common enemy -- Russia.

⁸⁷Vladimir Socor, "Moldovan-Ukrainian Treaty", RFE/RL Daily Report, 27 October 1992.

C. RELATIONS WITH THE CIS

The Russian-Moldovan relationship has had a large impact on Moldova's relations with the CIS. As pointed out in Chapter III, Moldova would prefer a limited association with the CIS. Snegur's government has attempted to limit its involvement with the Commonwealth, especially in the military areas, despite pressure from Russia. For example, in April, Ruslan Khasbulatov, Chairman of Russia's Parliament, said that Russia's position on Moldova's borders and on the Dniester area in general would hinge on whether Moldova remains a member of the CIS.⁸⁸ This came only nine months after Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) Prime Minister Ivan Silaev told Moldovapres that the RSFSR's cooperation with Moldavia "is considerably more successful than is the case with other republics" and that Moldavia's nonparticipation in the union treaty will not have any ill effects on relations between the two republics.⁸⁹

In June, President Snegur openly identified the differences he perceived in the type of CIS Russia wanted and the type Moldova preferred. He said Moldova "regarded the CIS as a means for discarding the former Soviet Empire in a peaceful and civilized way, Moscow seeks to use the CIS as a new form of

⁸⁸Vladimir Socor, "Russian Parliament Chairman Conditions Moldova's Territorial Integrity on CIS Membership", RFE/RL Daily Report, 24 April 1992.

⁸⁹Vladimir Socor, "More on Moldavia-RSFSR Agreement", RFE/RL Daily Report, 14 August 1991.

the USSR ..."⁹⁰ Moldova is unwilling to join a strong centrally governed CIS, and that is what Russia is trying to create. Russia is using Moldova's economic dependence on the countries of the Commonwealth to force concessions on military issues. In June, Russia's State Secretary Gennadii Burbulis was cited by Reuters as saying Russia was prepared to apply "economic sanctions" to force Moldova to recognize the Dniester Republic.⁹¹

In yet another move to get Moldova to increase her involvement in the CIS in the summer of 1992, the CIS leadership decided that those countries which had not ratified the CIS treaty, most notable Moldova and Azerbaijan, would not participate as full members and their status would be decided prior to the opening of each meeting.⁹² These are just a few of the examples of how the Russian-Moldovan relationship has a direct effect on Moldova's relations with the CIS in general.

⁹⁰Vladimir Socor, "Moldovan President Accuses Moscow of Misuse of CIS", RFE/RL Daily Report, 3 June 1992.

⁹¹Vladimir Socor, "Moldova Under 'Economic Blockade' by Russia", RFE/RL Daily Report, 30 June 1992.

⁹²Ann Sheehy, "Status of Moldova and Azerbaijan in CIS", RFE/RL Daily Report, 29 June 1992.

VII. CONCLUSION

The breakup of the Soviet Union has created many problems for the nascent countries. One of the foremost problems is how to develop relations among themselves, and with the outside world. Previously, the central government in Moscow defined the relationship between the republics and Russia, and even the relationship among differing republics. Now these governments, Russia included, must learn to deal with each others independent governments.

In learning how to establish these new relationships each country must first decide what its goals are, near-term and long-term, and how to meet them. But the resulting relationship will be bilateral, each country trying to meet its goals with little regard for the goals of the other. This is the serious problem which is facing the governments of Russia and Moldova as they try to find their place in the world.

Russia's government is dealing with the loss of an empire. Granted there are new people in the government but there is still a strong feeling among the people of Russia, and much of the leadership that the disintegration of the USSR has not been a good thing for Russia herself. Feelings such as this create the call for a strong CIS with Russia at the center. This view is expressed by Yurii

Burtin, a literary critic, "We cannot separate the Russian Republic from the center. We look back in history, and the center is somehow ourselves."⁹³

This push for unity from the Russians would seem to be more of a problem for the Slavic states, Ukraine and Belarus. However, because Moldova is strongly asserting her right to independent government and military structures free from "foreign" oppression, Russia is using her as a proving ground in an effort to maintain control of foreign policy in the former Soviet Union.⁹⁴ But even within the Russian government, there are questions as to what the direction of foreign policy should be and if control of the former republics is the best answer for Russia.

Russia is facing the task of determining whether it is still a European power, especially now that it has lost control over Eastern Europe and most of the European territory of the former USSR. Yeltsin's government has made statements which indicate that the overall policy of the government is to remain a major player in Europe, possibly with a smaller role at present while restructuring its economy. But in order to maintain access to Europe, Russia

⁹³Vera Tolz and Elizabeth Teague, "Russian Intellectuals Adjust to Loss of Empire", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, 21 February 1992, Num 8: p 4.

⁹⁴In April Moldovan Parliament Chairman Alexandru Mosanu was quoted by Moldovapres as saying "pro-imperial forces in Moscow had chosen Moldova as an example of what can be done to the newly-independent states which take their independence seriously." This was just prior to the announcement by Khasbulatov that the Russian parliaments position on the Dniester area and the inviolability of Moldova's borders hinged on Moldova's involvement in the CIS.

must maintain good relations with the countries which now lie between Russia and the West.

The only compromises Russia appears to be reaching with the Near Abroad are those which are necessitated by requirements for Western aid to stimulate the economy. But the economy is not turning around as fast as anyone had hoped. This has increased speculation that the reformist policies of the Yeltsin government may face ever-growing opposition.

Russia's somewhat moderate foreign policy stance, developed under Foreign Minister Kozyrev, is facing greater and greater challenges from the hard-liners in the Russian government. It is this pressure that will be instrumental in shaping the policy relationships between Russia and all states, but especially those between Russia and the Near Abroad. This pressure may cause Russian policy to move in directions counter to those which the other states may hope for.

This change is not just the result of pressure from confirmed hard-liners, but is also coming from former moderates, such as Sergei Stankevich, who are now taking a much more conservative and Russocentric position. How far to the right the policy will shift will be in large part determined by how much power Boris Yeltsin can maintain. The battle for political power in Russia is far from over. Despite the loss of some of his key ministers during the 1992 Russian Congress, Yeltsin has managed to maintain overall control of the government.

Despite Moldova's slow start in striving for independence, Moldova now has a government which is moving very quickly to carve itself a niche in the world. President Snegur's government has established working foreign relations with many states of the West as well as states of the former Soviet Union. The internal problems of the state, with the exception of the Dniester region, are being managed effectively. The Moldovan government has established a sound domestic policy, most notably with regard to foreign nationals, which is one of the most inclusive of any of the new states.

Her efforts to include all nationalities in her government, to establish schools for Ukrainians, Bulgarians, and others, to peacefully settle the dispute in the Gagauz region, and to make every effort to bring the Dniester conflict to a peaceful conclusion, are examples for others to follow.

President Snegur has found only one government he is unable to deal with in an equitable manner, the Russian government. Dealings with the Russian government are perhaps the most important that Moldova will have in the near term. If the past is any indicator of the future, conditions do not augur well for developing smooth relations. Until Moldova can get Russian troops which are currently occupying its territory to leave it is, to a large extent, at the mercy of the Russian government.

Moldova's relations with the rest of the world are going to be directly influenced by its relations with Russia. The relations with Russia are most impacted by the issue of Russian troops in Moldova. Moldova has made many

good faith attempts to solve this problem. These have been stymied at every turn by Russian unwillingness to withdraw, or even to bring in neutral third parties to help in mediation. Russia constantly ties the troop withdrawal issue to other issues, such as Moldova's relations with Romania and Moldova's participation in the CIS. In fact, Russia, under the guise of installing peacekeeping forces, has actually increased the number of Russian troops in the area since Moldova began asking for a withdrawal.

Russia's continued resupply of the insurgents both directly and through resupply of the 14th Army is an affront that cannot be ignored. But unless the Moldovan government wishes additional deaths in the region, there is little which they can do. Moldova has offered limited autonomy for the region and has relented in to almost every demand except allowing Dniester secession. The Dniester Republic leaders continue to consolidate their government and in October they tied their willingness to be a part of Moldova to Moldova's remaining in the CIS and remaining a part of the ruble zone, both prior Russian requirements.⁹⁵

The longer Russia manages to stalemate the Dniester Peace talks and troop withdrawal talks the more power they seem to think they will have. However as Russia's stance in these issues becomes more hard-line, other republics, especially Ukraine, seem to be growing more concerned about Russia and are

⁹⁵Vladimir Socor, "Dniester Leader Escalates Demands on Moldova", RFE/RL Daily Report, 30 October 1992.

supporting Moldova. There are also Western countries which are beginning to increasingly call for removal of Russian troops from the other countries of the former Soviet Union, including Moldova.

This international support, by countries other than Romania, is how Moldova may be able to end the negotiation gridlock with Russia. Because of massive economic need, Russia cannot afford to alienate any Western nation capable of providing help. Nor can Russia alienate members of the CIS if the government hopes to maintain any type of leadership role.

Russia's continued use of its waning military power to control the Russian-Moldovan relationship is being watched by the rest of the world. There are numerous articles which discuss whether Russian foreign policy will differ from Soviet foreign policy in any significant way or if the new Russian government can adjust to the fact that it is no longer one of two great superpowers.⁹⁶

The Russian-Moldovan relationship provides a good opportunity for study of how foreign relations develop between a strong well established state and a new state which was formerly a territory. Russia is still trying to assert superiority over the smaller weaker state. It has the advantage of having troops on the soil of the other country, and of still being strong enough that many are still wary of her might.

⁹⁶See for example Jeff Checkel, "Russian Foreign Policy: Back to the Future", RFE/RL Research Report, Vol 1, 16 October 1992, Num 41.

As the situation continues, however, the world is seeing that Russia is not as strong as it used to be. Countries it used to control, such as Ukraine, while still in many ways dependent on her due to the residual effects of the Soviet command economy, are becoming more willing to stand up for their own rights as well as the rights of others such as Moldova. This could create a dangerous situation where Russia becomes unwilling to back down because it does not want to appear weak.

This would create a no-win situation for the government in Moscow. They couldn't back down or the nationalistic right wingers may gain control. Nor could they afford to maintain the present situation because of international pressure. It is this dilemma which will force the hand of the current moderate government in regard to the present situation with Moldova. Moldova's easing position on troop withdrawal, willingness to allow the Dniester officials a place in the government and their rather liberal nationalism policies all work in the direction of reducing the conflict in the Russian-Moldovan relationship.

If the Yeltsin government takes a continued hard-line stance on relations with Moldova there is the risk that the West will perceive the government as too hard-line and economic aid could dry up. If she loses any ground due to the involvement of other countries, she risks a backlash from the right-wingers in Russia claiming she is unable to protect Russian outside her borders. Either way the Yeltsin government is finished. The obvious answer is to quickly finish present negotiations which will enable the Russian government to show that it

is will to treat the government of the former republics as sovereign entities, if not equals, and that it still is able to protect Russians outside her borders. While treating the governments of the states of the former Union does not seem to be the direction Russian Foreign policy is headed, it may be a short term necessity. If it is it will enable the Moldovan government to get peace within its borders and finally be able to concentrate on the other matters facing this new government.

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